

BRINGING MISSING CHILDREN HOME ACT OF 2014

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Domestic child sex trafficking remains a serious problem in the United States. There are an estimated 293,000 American youths at risk of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. The U.S. Department of Justice reports that between 2008-2010, 83 percent of sex trafficking victims found within the United States were U.S. citizens and 40 percent of sex trafficking cases involved the sexual exploitation of children.

Research suggests that the majority of trafficked youth in the United States have been in and out of the child welfare system and run from care immediately prior to being trafficked or sexually exploited. In July 2013 the FBI conducted a nationwide sting focusing on instances of child sex trafficking and recovered 105 sexually exploited children; more than 70 percent had prior involvement with the child welfare system or foster care.

The strong correlation between children who are missing or abducted and children who are sex trafficked or commercially sexually exploited makes it imperative that law enforcement better coordinate directly with the state and local child welfare systems to consistently report missing children and improve the quality of information available to law enforcement in the investigation so that the child can be found.

The Bringing Missing Children Home Act of 2014 improves law enforcement reporting and response procedures to cases of missing children, the most vulnerable to be victims of child sex trafficking and sexual exploitation.

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- ☐ Amends the Missing Children's Assistance Act to replace the term "child prostitution" with "child sex trafficking." This change is consistent with federal law and reinforces that children who are sex trafficked or sexually exploited are victims, not criminals.
- ☐ Requires law enforcement to update the records of missing children within 30 days after the initial report with additional information learned through the investigation, including medical records, dental records, and a photograph, where available.
- ☐ Requires law enforcement to coordinate directly with the state and local child welfare systems when a child is reported missing in order to expand the information available about the missing child for the purposes of the investigation.
- ☐ Allows state missing persons units and state law enforcement to modify a missing child entry to include information as it is uncovered through investigation. Under current regulations, missing persons units and state Attorneys General cannot modify records in the National Crime Information Center to include newly discovered information unless they have been granted permission by the Originating Agency Identifier or National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Portman and Schumer's legislation removes this roadblock by taking the commonsense step of allowing state law enforcement to update records as new information is uncovered.